

# Women Warriors Newsletter

Women Veterans Program  
Providence VA Medical  
Center



Spring 2010



## Women's Health Care Team

Dr. Dawna Blake, Women's  
Health Care Director

Pilar Capili, RN, Clinic  
Coordinator

Beth Grady, LCSW, Women  
Veterans Program Manager

Karen Chase, NP, Provider

Dr. Joan Karl, Provider

Dr. Neha Pathak, Provider

Joyce Simon, NP, Provider

Dr. Natalie Mariano, Hyan-  
nis CBOC, Provider

Dr. Gregory Nye, New  
Bedford CBOC, Provider

Dr. Terri Tamase, Middle-  
town CBOC, Provider

### March: Women's History Month!

The Department of Veterans Affairs celebrated Women's History Month (March) by recognizing and honoring the valiant contributions of our women Veterans. Each one of the 1.8 million women Veterans alive today serves as a living reminder of the courage and sacrifice that women have made and continue to make for our nation. Women were officially recognized as members of the armed forces in 1901, but their military involvement dates back to the Revolutionary War. There is no better time than Women's History Month to commend and thank them for their service.

Women are now the fastest growing subgroup of U.S. Veterans. As of 2007, 14.3% of active duty military (all branches) were women; 11 percent of the fighting force in Iraq and Afghanistan are women. The number of women Veterans is expected to increase dramatically in the next 10 years, and VA health care is expected to be in high demand by the young women Veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Department of Veterans Affairs understands the health care needs of women Veterans and is committed to meeting these needs. Women Veterans served and they deserve the best quality care.



## FYI



### CAN YOU GUESS WHAT THIS IS?

1. A bicycle lock
2. The latest in school locker locks
3. A luggage lock
4. None of the above.

Go to page 3 for the answer!



## “Sexual Trauma Can Make You Sick”

Citing a 2000 study, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that one in six women in the United States reported experiencing an attempted or completed rape at some time in their lives. Sexual violence, or sexual trauma, can have a profound impact on a victim's physical and mental health. It is associated with an increased risk of a range of sexual and reproductive health problems and can lead to other long-term health problems, including chronic pain, headaches, and stomach problems. Victims of sexual trauma are more likely to abuse drugs or alcohol or engage in risky sexual behavior. In some cases, anger and stress stemming from such abuse trigger eating disorders, depression, and even suicide.

VA refers to sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment during military service as military sexual trauma (MST). Approximately one out of five women who visits VA facilities tells her VA health care provider she experienced sexual trauma in the military. To help Veterans recover from MST, VA provides free care for related physical and mental health conditions. Veterans do not need to have a service-connected VA disability rating; they may be able to receive MST care even if they are not eligible for other VA care. Every VA facility has a designated MST Coordinator who serves as a contact person for MST-related issues. This person can help Veterans find and access VA services and programs, state and federal benefits, as well as community resources. Every VA facility also has providers knowledgeable about treatment for the effects of MST. For more information about services available, Veterans can speak with their existing VA health care provider, contact the MST Coordinator at their nearest VA Medical Center, or contact their local Vet Center.

### Mental Health Hotline 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

References:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/images/sv%20factsheet.pdf> (CDC Fact Sheet citing National Violence Against Women Survey)

[http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/SV\\_factsheet-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/SV_factsheet-a.pdf)

Kimerling, R., Gima, K., Smith, M. W., Street, A., & Frayne, S. (2007). The Veterans Health Administration and military sexual trauma. *American Journal of Public Health*, 97(12), 2160-2166.

WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

DEPRESSION  
TROUBLE SLEEPING  
WEIGHT CHANGE  
ANXIETY  
PHYSICAL PAIN  
MEMORY LOSS

Sexual trauma can make you sick.  
Let VA help.

\* You served, you deserve the best care anywhere. \*

Department of Veterans Affairs | 1600 ...  
www.va.gov

**Spotlight****Dr Neha Pathak  
Women Health Provider**

I grew up in New Jersey, went to college at Harvard, and finished Medical School and Residency at Cornell University/New York Hospital in Manhattan. I decided to join the VA as a Primary Care/Women's Health Provider because I love the idea of taking care of patients "under one roof." Both patients and providers get a lot of support from so many of the wonderful programs at the VA. When I'm not working, I love to read, watch movies, dance, and explore New England with my husband.

**Incentive Work Therapy is Good for All**

Are you interested in engaging in a structured work program that provides purposeful daily activity within the Providence VAMC? Then Incentive Work Therapy (IWT) may be for you! IWT provides an opportunity to gain assistance in addressing mental health issues by engaging in structured diversionary activities within the PVAMC. The program provides clinical benefits such as avoidance of social isolation and establishment of social supports, while improving communication skills, establishing work readiness skills, and helping you manage uncomfortable symptoms by engaging in daily structured activities. IWT is a vocationally-based program that operates similar to a volunteer program, except all the participants are supervised, paid a stipend, and are assigned tasks within the Medical Center. There are IWT positions located within outpatient transport, the SPD department, the pharmacy, the canteen, the Veterans Resource Recovery Center, the warehouse, and in women's health. You must be receiving care through the Mental Health Department of the PVAMC to be eligible for the program. Ask your provider if this program will benefit you. If so, he or she can place a consult requesting your enrollment in this program. If you have any questions, or would like to learn more about this program, please feel free to contact Stacie Souza at 401-273-7100, ext. 3435.

**Project Childsafe**

"D" is the correct answer!

The VA has partnered with Project Childsafe to make gunlocks available to our Veterans. Project Childsafe is a nationwide program, the purpose of which is to promote safe firearms handling and storage practices among all firearms owners through the distribution of key safety educational messages and free gun locking devices (firearms safety kits). While service members and Veterans may be expertly trained in the use of firearms under conditions of deployment, they may not have had previous experience in the care and storage of guns in the context of their civilian lives. This is particularly important for those who have children in their homes.

Gunlocks are available, free of charge. Gunlocks may also be provided to spouses, significant others, and/or family members of Veterans. Contact either Susan Raffa (ext 3401, Building 1) or Liz Johnson (ext 3287, T36) for more information. You may also contact Law Enforcement at ext 3308, Building T-18.

**Numbers to Know;  
Numbers to Grow**

**Eligibility & Enrollments**  
401-457-3300

**OEF/OIF Program Manager:**  
401-273-7100, ext. 6137

**Mental Health hotline**  
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

**Telephone Assistant Program (TAP) Line**  
401-457-3336  
1-866-590-2976

**Homeless Resources**  
401-273-7100, ext. 3553

**State of Rhode Island  
Department of Human  
Services Division of Veterans  
Affairs**  
401-254-8460

**Veterans Benefits  
Administration, Women  
Veterans Coordinator**  
401-223-3651

**Human services and helping  
agencies**  
2-1-1

**VET CENTERS:**  
Warwick: 401-739-0167  
New Bedford: 508-999-6920  
Hyannis: 508-778-0124

# Healthy Hearts, Healthy Lives

**Providence VA Medical Center**  
 830 Chalkstone Avenue  
 Providence, Rhode Island  
 02908

**Hyannis CBOC**  
 VA Primary Care Center  
 233 Stevens Street  
 Hyannis, MA 02601-3766  
 Phone: (508) 771-3190

**Middletown CBOC**  
 One Corporate Place  
 (West Main Road at  
 Northgate Road)  
 Middletown, RI 02842  
 Phone: (401) 847-6239

**New Bedford CBOC**  
 175 Elm Street  
 New Bedford, Mass 02740  
 Phone: (508) 994-5489



## MOVE!

Are you a woman Veteran who is looking for a healthy and lasting approach to weight loss? If so, you may want to consider joining us for the Women’s MOVE! (Managing Overweight Veterans Everywhere) program. Each meeting is led by a team comprised of a dietician, registered nurse, physical therapist, or behavioral therapist—all designed to help participants self-manage their weight loss efforts through learning, discussion, reflection, and the support of others. We meet every Wednesday from 1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. in the Medical Center’s 4th floor dining room. If interested in joining, contact Amy Barrette, RD, at 273-7100, ext .3186.



The Providence VA was fortunate to have Community Service Chef Educator **Linda Kane** and her students from Johnson and Wales University show a lucky group of Veterans how to cook healthier during Heart Healthy Month in February (see photo at bottom left). Here is a great recipe that was a hit with everyone!

### FRESH FIVE COLOR SALSA

#### Ingredients

- 2 ea. Ripe Tomatoes (diced)
- 1/2 ea. Red Onion (minced)
- 1 ea. Green Pepper
- 1 ea. Red Bell Pepper
- 1ea. Corn, kernels only
- 1 ea. Red Jalapeno (minced, seeds removed)
- 1 can black beans, drained, rinsed
- 2 Tbsp. Cilantro, washed, chopped
- 1 Tbsp Cider Vinegar
- Salt/pepper to taste

#### Method of Preparation

1. Wash and chop all of the vegetables to specified size
2. Place the chopped produce in a large bowl and season with the salt, pepper and vinegar
3. Let the salsa sit for at least 15 minutes to allow the juices from the vegetables to incorporate
4. Serve with chips or as a side to any summer meal.

*The Providence VA Medical Center is committed to meeting the unique needs of women Veterans by delivering the highest quality health care to each woman, while offering her the privacy, dignity, and sensitivity to gender-specific needs that she deserves. Our full time Women Veterans Program Manager is ready to assist you in getting timely access to the health care you need.*

### WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

*You served, you deserve  
 ★ the best care anywhere.*



**Beth Grady, LCSW**  
 Women Veteran Program Manager  
 401-273-7100 ext. 6191